A Sioux narrative of the outbreak in 1862, and of Sibley's expedition in 1863 /

A SIOUX NARRATIVE OF THE OUTBREAK IN 1862, AND OF SIBLEY'S EXPEDITION IN 1863.

BY GABRIEL RENVILLE.*

* Read at the monthly meeting of the Executive Council, Dec. 14, 1903, by Mr. R. I. Holcombe, who has added several foot-notes.

With a Biographic Sketch of the Author by Samuel J. Brown .

This Narrative is supplied through the kindness of Mr. Samuel J. Brown, son of Major Joseph R. Brown. The circumstances of his receiving the original Sioux manuscript, and of its translation, are told by Mr. Brown as follows:

This is to certify that I was well acquainted with Gabriel Renville, and know his handwriting, and also know that he was unable to speak or write the English language; that said Renville died at my house in Brown's Valley, Minn., August 26, 1892, aged about sixty-eight years; that sometime before the death of the said Renville his son, Rev. Victor Renville of Sisseton Agency, South Dakota, stated to me that he had in his possession an old manuscript written by his father concerning the Sioux outbreak of 1862; and that, upon my request, the said Victor Renville delivered to me the said manuscript, which appeared quite old, the first two or three pages being missing.

I further certify that Gabriel Renville, herein referred to, is the Gabriel Renville who was prominent in the councils of the Sisseton and Wahpeton Indians prior to and during the outbreak of 1862, who was appointed Chief of Scouts by General Sibley, and

subsequently, at the suggestion of the Department of the Interior, was made Head Chief of said bands and remained such chief until his death.

I further certify that I examined the manuscript given to me by Victor Renville, and recognized it as being in the Sioux language and in the handwriting of said Gabriel Renville; that said Victor Renville stated to me that the manuscript was written by his father, Gabriel Renville, and was given to him about the time of his father's death; that I went to work upon said 596 manuscript, which was in the Sioux language, and, in connection with Thomas A. Robertson of Veblin, South Dakota, an educated mixed-blood, made, in March last, a complete and accurate translation of the same; that the paper to which this certificate is attached is the original Sioux manuscript prepared by said Gabriel Renville; and that the copy with corrections, also hereto attached, is a true and correct translation of said manuscript into English. Samuel J. Brown .

Note .—As a few pages at the beginning of Gabriel Renville's manuscript had been lost, it may be stated that he relates first what he saw at the Yellow Medicine Agency, also known as the Upper Agency, near the junction of the Yellow Medicine river with the Minnesota river, about thirty miles above the Redwood or Lower Agency, and nearly fifty miles above Fort Ridgely. The time was Tuesday, August 19th, the next day after the outbreak and massacre at the Lower Agency. Renville appears to be on the way from his farm, north of the Minnesota river, when he met a party of the Sioux, from whom he learned of the general outbreak, and of the attack against the Upper Agency during the preceding night.

THE OUTBREAK AT THE YELLOW MEDICINE AGENCY.

…It was some of these who came that night and drove away the storekeepers and plundered. They also reported that all the whites at the Agency had made a stand in the Agency buildings. They who reported this were of those who were not enemies to the whites.

I then went on as fast as I could towards the Agency, and stopped suddenly in front of the west door of the warehouse building. I did not see a single person, but heard very much of thumping noises. I then went around to the east door, and there saw that they had gone in that way and were plundering inside.

There was a house about four hundred yards south of the Agency buildings, from which I saw a woman come crying. I went towards her, and when I reached her I found it was my mother. She was very much frightened. When she saw that it was I, she was overcome and fell to the ground, and though she tried to get up she would fall to the ground again. I got down and took hold of her, assisting her to rise, and said, “Don't cry, but stand up. A great calamity has come to us, and we may all die. Stop crying,and try to control yourself.”

I asked her what had become of the white people who belonged at the Agency. She said that that night, near daylight, 597 John Other Day had started with them all towards the east, and that among them was one white man who had been shot but was still alive and was taken along. [This was Stewart B. Garvie.] Then she said, “Your brother has gone to your sister's. It has now been a long time since he went, but he has not come back. I expect they are all dead.” She meant my sister who lived with her children about eight miles south of the Agency. Then I said to her, “Mother, go back into the house and stay quiet there, and I will go home and come here again.” I then mounted my horse, and rode as fast as I could towards my home.

About three miles north of the Agency there lived a white man who was a minister [Rev. Thomas S. Williamson]. He was the first man who came among the Wahpetons to teach them, and was called the Doctor. He came out and met me, and asked what was being done and what the news was. I told him, “My friend, a great commotion has come. All the people at the Redwood Agency, and all the farmers across the river from that Agency, are reported to have been killed. But the people of the Yellow Medicine Agency, and the traders at that place, have all fled under the guidance of John Other Day last night. Everything in the stores has been taken, and those buildings have been burned. The

Agency buildings have been plundered and everything taken, but they are not burned. These things are true. Therefore, my friend, flee." He replied, "I have been a long time with the Dakotas, and I don't think they will kill me. My children have all gone, and I am alone with my wife." Then I said to him, "It is reported that even the mixed-bloods who are Dakotas have been killed, and the only thing for you to do is to flee." I then went into the house and shook hands with the woman, and again urged them to escape. Their fright was very great, as could be told by their paleness of countenance; and the wild look in the eyes of all whom I met, being the same in the faces and eyes of these people, moved by heart.

I came out of the house, rode swiftly away, and, fording the river, reached my home. I found the horses already hitched to the wagon, and we started in a hurry, going toward a ford which was a good crossing for wagons. I saw at that time the Doctor's children and others with them, who were crossing the river and fleeing towards the east under the guidance of an Indian who was friendly to the whites.

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We crossed the river and went towards the Agency, and when we had gone about four miles some of the people I met were drunk. Two men took my horses by the bits, and accused me of fleeing towards the whites, and said that whoever did that was now an enemy. I told them I was not going there, but they did not believe me, and they used me roughly. I saw they were drunk, because one of them had a bottle tied to his arm. I then jumped to the ground, tore their hands loose from me, and took the bottle away from the man who had it. Pulling out the cork, I took a mouthful and swallowed some of it, but it burned my mouth and throat, so that I did not swallow all of it. I poured it out, and threw the bottle away and then went on. The reason why it burned my mouth was that it was white liquor and had not been mixed with water.

In a cellar under one of the buildings at the Agency was a forty gallon barrel of alcohol for the use of the Agency physician, which had been found by them and created very much of a commotion among the people who were then about the Agency. Every person had

his gun, and those who were drunk were preparing to shoot at one another; but those that were not drunk held them, and that was how it came that no one was killed.

I saw this and went on to my mother's house, and found that my brother who had gone to where my sister and her children were living had come back. He reported that they had fled, but that some of the hostile Indians came, and that he thought they must have all been killed. These hostiles had their minds made up to kill him, but there was one who took his part and saved his life. Runners were continually arriving from the hostile Indians.

It was next reported that a detachment of soldiers that had been sent out from Fort Ridgely had been all killed.* About five o'clock in the evening it was reported that Major Brown's wife, children, and son-in-law, had all been taken prisoners. Major Brown's wife was our sister.

* Reference is made to the affair at Redwood ferry, August 18, 1862.

Thirteen of us decided to go into the Agency buildings and make a stand there, because they were strong, brick buildings. In the Agent's house were Mazo-ma-ne (Walking in Irons), Hin-tah-chan (Basswood), Shu-pay-he-yu (Intestines came out), 599 and Pay-tah-koyag-enah-pay (Appeared clothed in Fire). In the doctor's house were Ah-kee-pah (Coming together), Charles Crawford, Thomas Crawford, and Han-yo-ke-yah (Flies in the Night). In the school building were myself (Gabriel Renville), Two Stars, and E-nee-hah (Excited). In the farmer's building were Koda (Friend), and Ru-pah-hu (Wing). It was the next morning that we did this. Then Charles Crawford and Ah-kee-pah went to get Major Brown's wife and children, and got them and brought them back.

News was coming in every day, that Fort Ridgely was being attacked, that white settlers to the east and south were being massacred, and that New Ulm was attacked. It was also reported that a party of hostile Indians, many young men, had gone north on a war party, there being white people there and also a fort toward which they went.*

* Fort Abercrombie, on the Red River of the North, about twelve miles north of Breckenridge.

After these many things had come to pass, the hostile Indians, with their families, moved up towards the Yellow Medicine Agency, and had now arrived. Then Tah-o-yah-tay-doo-tah, or Little Crow, the chosen chief of the hostile Indians, came to where we were, and told us to get out of the houses that we were in. He said, “These houses are large and strong, and must be burned. If they are not burned, the soldiers will come and get into them, Therefore get out, and if you do not you will be burned with the buildings.” So we got our horses and hitched them to our wagons, into which we put our belongings, and started north.

EFFORTS TO AID THE WHITE CAPTIVES.

When we had gone about a mile and a half, we came to where the hostile Indians had formed a camp. As we were passing through the camp, I saw many white prisoners, old women, young women, boys and girls, bareheaded and barefooted, and it made my heart hot, and so I said to Ah-kee-pah, Two Stars, and E-nee-hah, “If these prisoners were only men, instead of women and children, it would be all right, but it is hard that this terrible suffering should be brought upon women and children, and they have killed many of even such as these.” I therefore had in mind to call a council, invite the hostile Indians, and appoint Mazo-ma-ne 600 and Marpiya-wicasta (Cloud Man) to say to the hostiles that it was our wish that the prisoners should be sent home. Ah-kee-pah, Two Stars, and E-nee-hah, agreed with me in my idea, and they told me to go on and do so.

We had by this time got about five miles from the Agency, at the home of Mr. Riggs. These houses were not yet burned and were occupied by some of the friendly Indians. John B. Renville was with them, and we made our camp near them.

I told Mazo-ma-ne and Cloud Man what I wanted of them, and they said they would do as I wished. I then went to the people that were in the Hazelwood Mission house, and told them what I was planning to do, and they also told me to go ahead and do it, and J. B. Renville gave me a calf to kill to feed the people that were to be called to that council. This was in the evening. The next morning early I killed a cow which I had tied up, and picked out two men, Tah-ta-wah-kan-hdi and Hinta-chan, to do the cooking.

When all was ready, but before the invitation was sent to the hostile camp, a large body of horsemen came towards us from that camp, two hundred or more. They all had their guns, their faces were painted, and they were gaily dressed. They came and stopped at our camp. Then I said to them, “We were about to send for you to come here to a council. But as you are here, whatever your purpose may be in coming, for the present get off your horses and have something to eat.” They then got down, and after they had eaten they mounted again, and, forming around our camp, said, “We have come for you, and if you do not come, the next time we will come to attack you;” and firing their guns into the air they departed.

By this time Cloud Man, Mazo-ma-ne, and all those of our people who were about there came, and were much angered and said, “The Medawakantons have many white prisoners. Can it be possible that it is their object to make the Wahpetons and Sissetons their captives too? Call together those who are Wahpetons and Sissetons, and we will prepare to defend ourselves.”

I at once sent out the two young men whom I had helping, and they on horseback went about and gathered our people together. When about three hundred had arrived, we painted our faces and got our guns, and, mounting our horses and singing, went towards their camp. When we arrived near the hostile 601 camp, we kept firing our guns into the air until we got within the circle of their encampment, and then rode around inside and came out again where we went in.

It was decided at that time that we would get all our people together and in the future act on the defense. With this understanding, all started to bring in their families for the purpose of forming one general camp of those friendly to the whites and apart from those who were hostile. We formed our camp in a circle west of Mr. Riggs' Hazelwood Mission buildings, and a large tent was put up in the center of the camp.

A soldiers' lodge was organized, and four men, myself, Joseph La Framboise, Marpiya-hdi-na-pe, and Wakpa-ee-yu-way-ga, were chosen as the chief officers or directors of this soldiers' lodge, to act for the best interests of the Sisseton and Wahpeton peace party.

After these four had been duly installed and authority given them, the first question discussed was the release of the prisoners, both whites and mixed-bloods; and it was decided that the effort should be made to have these prisoners returned to the whites, excepting that the men who were able to fight might be retained. The reason for this decision of the directors of the soldiers' lodge was that the hostile Indians would claim that if the men were released they would turn right around and fight them. Little Paul (Maza-ku-ta-ma-ne) was chosen as spokesman to present this to the hostile Indians.

Then the Medawakantons, the very enemies of the white people, called a big council, and invited us to it.* So we prepared ourselves by arming ourselves and painting our faces, and went over to their camp. It was decided, before we started, that now was the time for Little Paul to present the case for the release of the prisoners. When we arrived at the council, the Medawakantons made many speeches, in which they urged strongly the prosecution of the war against the whites to the fullest extent. Then Little Paul arose and made a speech, in which he said all he was instructed to say in regard to the release of the prisoners.

* For a report of this council, Little Paul's speech, etc., see Heard's History of the Sioux War, pp. 151–153.

The spokesman of the Medawakantons was Wa-ki-yan-to-eche-ye (Thunder that paints itself blue), who arose and said 602 that the captives should not be released, that the hostile Indians had brought trouble and suffering upon themselves, and that the captives would have to stay with them and participate in their troubles and deprivations. Many others spoke on their side. It was a big meeting, nearly a thousand people being present, and there was much excitement up to the time of the breaking up of the council.

BATTLE OF BIRCH COULIE.

It was now reported that many soldiers had got together at Fort Ridgely, and Little Crow with about four hundred men started for the Redwood Agency. About this time a detachment of soldiers had been to the Redwood Agency, and on their return camped at Birch Coulie. They were attacked that night by this party and were fighting until daylight. During that fight a mixed-blood ran out of the soldiers' camp, but was killed as soon as he got among the Indians.* After that a large party of soldiers came from Fort Ridgely, which stopped the fighting, as we were told.

* Peter Bourier, of Capt. Anderson's company, who was on picket duty when killed. A report that he was deserting to the Indians was never verified.

Some who had been at that battle said that they thought they recognized Major Brown's voice, and it caused me to think much, for we had his wife and children with us. I then went to our soldiers' lodge, and, taking my place there, said that as it had been reported that many had been killed at the battle of Birch Coulie, we ought to send a party to investigate and find out, if possible, about how many were killed. My reason for this was that I wanted to come to some conclusion as to whether Major Brown was dead or alive. We then discussed the question, and it was decided that some one ought to be sent down there, and I suggested Charles Crawford. Others said that there ought to be two, so Wa-su-ho-was-tay was named, and these two were selected and sent to investigate the battle ground of Birch Coulie. When the Medawakantons heard of this, they also sent two of their men.

Our men came back the next day. They reported that they had been to the battle ground, and there were more than ten graves, but that they could tell nothing about how many were buried in each grave.

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Charles Crawford said that he had found a paper on the battle ground, but that those who were with him did not know that he had found it, and then he gave me the paper. This paper, he said, had been put into a cigar box and tied to a small pole or stake and stuck up on the battle ground. General Sibley's name was signed to this paper, so I knew that he had written it. I took it to our council lodge, and had it carefully read.

In this paper General Sibley wanted to know why it was that the Indians had become hostile to the whites, and that if any of them wished to see him they could do so, but must go in the road in plain sight, and that they would not be harmed and could return again. On getting this news, the minds of our people were still more drawn towards the whites.

COUNCIL ADDRESSED BY LITTLE PAUL AND LITTLE CROW.

Then we had a consultation in regard to the mixed-bloods, who, though they were white, were children of the Indians. It was thought to be wrong that their property should be taken from them, and that therefore their horses and wagons should be returned to them. After we had discussed the matter, it was decided to demand the property, and Little Paul was chosen as spokesman to present the matter to the hostile Indians.

We again painted our faces, took our guns, and went to the Medawakanton camp; and when we arrived at their soldiers' lodge, Little Paul said what he was told to say.* Then the public crier of the Medawakantons arose and said, “The mixed-bloods ought not to be alive, they should have been killed. But now you say their property should be returned to them. We will never do so.”

* For Little Paul's speech on this occasion, see Heard's History, pp. 156,157. The speech was reported by Rev. John B. Renville and his wife, the latter a white woman and a missionary.

Little Crow spoke next, and said that he was the leader of those who had made war on the whites; that as long as he was alive no white man should touch him; that if he ever should be taken alive, he would be made a show of before the whites; and that, if he was ever touched by a white man, it would be after he was dead.

So the hostile Indians would not consent to have the property of the mixed-bloods returned; but Joseph Campbell's wagon, 604 Mrs. J. R. Brown's wagon and horse, and Mrs. Andrew Robertson's wagon, were taken by us and returned to them. As we could see by this time that if any more of this property was taken by us and returned to the owners it would cause a fight between us and the hostile Indians, we stopped and went back to our camp.

After these things had happened, about three hundred horsemen came from the Medawakanton camp with their guns, singing and shouting their war cry. They came around on the outside of our circular camp, and, stopping in front of our entrance way, shot at the tops of our tepees, and shouting their war cry departed.

In the face of all this opposition of the hostile Indians, we were still determined to keep on the course we had laid out for ourselves, and again getting together decided that some person or persons should be sent to General Sibley's headquarters at Fort Ridgely. When the Medawakantons heard of this, they made the threat that anyone who was sent to Fort Ridgely would be killed. There was much discussion over the matter, but finally, when Little Crow said he was in favor of some one being sent, the two Toms [Thomas Robinson and Thomas A. Robertson] were designated as the ones to go, and they went.

We then got together again in our council lodge and decided to move our camp, having in mind to do everything in our power to discourage the hostile Indians. We hoped that finally they would see that we were so determined in our purpose that it would be wise for them to consent to our proposition in regard to the prisoners, and we therefore moved our camp.

About this time the two who had gone to Fort Ridgely for news returned. They had seen General Sibley, who had told them that he was not the enemy of those who were friendly to the whites, but was most assuredly the enemy of those who were the enemies of the whites; that he must have the captives returned first; and then he would meet the hostile Indians as men.

We then moved our camp, and the hostiles also moved theirs. They went north till they came to Red Iron's village, where they were halted, and, a great commotion occurring, a scattered camp was made. Some shots were fired, but no one was killed. The result of this move at Red Iron's was that the hostile Indians went no farther at that time.

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When all had moved away from Yellow Medicine, Simon Anawag-ma-ne took a captive woman* and her child who could talk English, and, hiding with them, fled towards the whites. Lorenzo Lawrence also about that time took his own family and a white woman† and hid in the river bottom. Finding a canoe, he put them into it and started down the river in the night. On his way he came across a mixed-blood woman, who, with her children, was hiding, and taking them along he arrived safely with them at Fort Ridgely.

* A German woman, named Mrs. Neumann. Simon conveyed her and her three children in his one-horse wagon, he walking all the way.

† The white woman was Mrs. Jeannette E. De Camp. wife of J. W. De Camp, and she had three children. Her husband was killed at Birch Coulie. The mixed blood woman was the wife of Magloire Robideaux, a half-blood, who at the time was a member of the Renville

Rangers, and who subsequently was a soldier of the Fifth Minnesota Regiment. Thus Lawrence released from captivity and restored to their friends no less than ten persons.

At about the same time two other mixed-blood families, who had been held as prisoners, made their escape. These were the wife and three children of William L. Quinn and the widow and daughter of Philander Prescott. Mr. Quinn was in charge of Forbes' store at the Upper Agency, but on the day of the outbreak was at Shakopee, on his return from a visit to St. Paul. When his family escaped, he was serving as a scout with General Sibley's army. Philander Prescott had been in Minnesota, chiefly connected with and among the Indians, for nearly forty years. He was residing at the Lower Agency on the morning of the outbreak, and when the murdering began sought to escape, but was intercepted and killed, and his gray head was cut off and stuck on a pole.

Mrs. Quinn had their children, named Ellen, William, and Thomas, and also her mother, Mrs. Elizabeth Jeffries, another mixed-blood woman, who assisted in the work of escape, and Mrs. Prescott had her daughter, Julia. The two families, who had been held as prisoners slipped away from the Indian camp while the warriors were out at the battle of Wood Lake. They, too, came down the Minnesota in canoes, proceeding slowly and carefully for several days, living on potatoes dug from the abandoned gardens of the settlers. At last they reached Fort Ridgely and were cared for by the garrison. Mr. and Mrs. Quinn and William L. Quinn, Jr., now reside in St. Paul.

The making of the scattered camp, caused by the halting and commotion at Red Iron's village, had the effect of breaking up the hostile soldiers' lodge, and to some extent the influence that it had exercised over their own people. Therefore when it was proposed that messengers should again be sent to General Sibley, a few of the Medawakantons felt inclined towards the whites, and, secretly getting Thomas A. Robertson to write a letter for them, sent it by him to General Sibley. This letter was signed by Taopi, Good Thunder, and Wabashaw. There were other letters written to General Sibley, but all unknown to the hostile Indians.

The friendly Indians were by this time becoming much stronger, and getting together formed a camp west of the mouth of the Chippewa river. Then Taopi, Good Thunder, Wah-ke-yan-tah-wah, and a few others, came into the friendly camp.

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At this time the messengers that had been sent to Fort Ridgely the second time returned and reported that General Sibley was preparing to advance, and that the troops were crossing over to the west side of the Minnesota river.

At this camp it was reported to us that the so-called Medawakanton soldiers were coming to attack us, and we determined to defend ourselves. We soon saw them coming and got our guns, and then getting behind our tents selected about twenty of our men, among them being Mazo-ma-ne, Two Stars, Basswood, Wa-su-ho-was-tay, Wa-ki-ya-hde, and A-chay-tu-ke-yah, with Mazo-ma-ne as spokesman, to go and meet them and tell them that they must come no farther, but go back, and that, if they persisted in coming on, we would fire on them.

So these men went to meet the Medawakantons, and forming in line waited for them to come. When they got near, Mazo-ma-ne commanded them to halt, and said to them, “If you come any nearer we will shoot. Why are you treating us in this way? You have brought about the destruction of everything we had to live on. Do you also want to make captives of us? No, you can never make us your captives. Go back.” So they went back, without coming any farther.*

* Mazo-ma-ne was mortally wounded at the battle of Wood Lake, while carrying a white flag as directed by General Sibley. See “Monuments and Tablets,” p. 73.

The horses had eaten all the grass down to the ground, so we moved our camp about a half mile to the east. There again the Medawakanton soldiers came, and having taken us

unawares pushed over some of our tents, but on being ordered to stop they quit and went back to their camp.

BATTLE OF WOOD LAKE.

They later moved their camp about a half mile to the westward. It was at that time that the hostile Indians decided that they were ready to go and meet General Sibley's command, ordering everybody to go, and making the threat that those who did not go would be punished by their soldiers' lodges, and that now was the time to wipe out General Sibley's command, which they said they intended to do. This was the reason that some of the friendly Indians were told to go down there to see if the soldiers 607 would all be killed, and the others to stay and take care of the camp.

The start was now made to meet the troops. Sibley had gone into camp about one and a half miles south of the Yellow Medicine river, and the Indians were camped on that river. A consultation was then had as to how it was best to attack Sibley's command, the council being held in the evening. Little Crow's plan was to quietly advance under cover of the darkness until the guards fired, and then rush in, and, as soon as the troops rose up, to halt, fire one volley, charge forward, and massacre them.

Then I spoke and said, “It is not true, what you have said about there being only a few of the soldiers. There are many more than you have said. They also have spy-glasses, and have seen the Indians coming here. They have their big guns in readiness, and are prepared for a surprise. Therefore what you say is not right.”

Then Two Stars spoke and said, “I do not think your plan is a good one, because if the attack is made at night only a part of us will go, and many will not go. Your plan therefore would fail. I have been told that over here in the west they would lie in ambush for the troops, and when they came up to them the Indians would rush in, cutting the command in two, and then would kill them all. I think that would be a better plan for you.”

The reason for Two Stars saying this was, that, if the attack was made in daylight, the friendly Indians would have an opportunity to let the troops know what was planned. Thus the plan of attack was argued until daylight.

When the morning came, some of the soldiers who were going for potatoes were fired upon by the Indians and chased back into their camp, and two companies of soldiers came out and drove the Indians back. Then all the hostile Indians rushed in, and drove back the two companies of soldiers, and killed three of them before they reached their camp. Afterward the Indians surrounded the camp, and fired on the troops from all sides. As soon as the soldiers were ready, however, they came out of the camp and pursued the Indians, killing many of them. The Indians then withdrew and went back to their camp, and the next morning fled to the northward.

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RESCUE OF THE CAPTIVES.

During this time the friendly Indians in their camp had been digging pits outside of their tents, and being armed went about taking and bringing into their camp the white captives, putting them into the pits, and thus rescuing them from their great sufferings.

About this time a war party, with some prisoners in their possession, were reported passing to the westward of the friendly camp. Therefore I and Too-kan-shaw-e-che-ya, with others, pursued them, and after some resistance they were compelled to give up the prisoners, and we brought them into the friendly camp. Strict guard was kept all that night.

The next day General Sibley arrived with his command, who made their camp to the eastward of the friendly camp, near the Minnesota river. With joyous handshaking we met, and the white prisoners were taken into the soldiers' camp.

During this time some of the hostile Indians with their families had been returning under cover of the night, and pitched their tents among the friendly Indians. This was reported

to General Sibley, who issued an order demanding that all arms and amunition that had been taken out of the stores and government warehouses should be given up, and this was done.

TRIAL AND EXECUTION OF INDIAN PRISONERS.

Then word came that the Indians would be sifted as you would sift wheat, the good grain to be put into the bin, but the chaff and the bad seeds to be burned. This was done, and all those who by good evidence were proven to have done anything against the whites were put into irons. Indians scouts were appointed and followed after the hostile Indians, many of whom were overtaken in their flight and brought back.

Soon after that the friendly Indians, with those of the hostiles who had sneaked in, were all ordered to move with their families to the Yellow Medicine Agency. A camp was formed on and about the Agency grounds, with a detachment of soldiers to guard them.

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At this time a few of the Indians from this camp crossed the Minnesota river and fled, and another party went off in the night and fled north. These things happening, the commander at this place ordered every man, woman, and child, to come, and a list was made of all those who were under his charge. All able-bodied men were shut up and put under guard, but shortly afterwards those who were friendly were released.

Again, another one of those who were under guard got away, and the commanding officer ordered that, if he was not found and delivered over to the soldiers, the head men should be locked up in his place. Search was immediately made, he was found and captured, and was delivered over to the soldiers.

As myself and Ah-kee-pah, and our families, had not been implicated in any of the outrages against the whites, we were given the privilege of being outside of the Indian

camp, coming and going as we pleased. This being the case, I went back to my old home across the Minnesota river.

Soon after this, General Sibley with his command, bringing the Indians that were there with him, moved down to the Yellow Medicine Agency, and thence, taking all that were there, moved down to the Redwood Agency.

Everything that I owned at my old home had been taken or destroyed by the hostile Indians. Having nothing to live on, and the outlook being very dreary, I moved my camp to Redwood Agency, and pitched my tent with the friendly Indians who were then camped on the north side of Sibley's command. The families of those who had been suspected of doing anything against the whites were camped on the south side of the troops.

From this encampment, after the proceedings of the military court had been closed, and when all parties had come in from hunting the hostile Indians, those who were friendly, with their families and the families of those who had been convicted, were taken to Fort Snelling, and the convicted men were taken to Mankato.

On the way, when they were passing through the town of New Ulm, the whites were very much excited. Both men and women, coming with stones, bricks, and pitchforks, and anything they could lay their hands on, and rushing through the ranks of 39 610 the soldiers who were guarding them, attacked the chained prisoners in the wagons, and knocked many of them senseless. The guards, striking these whites with their sabers, drove them back. Finally, with much difficulty, they were brought through the town. Arriving at Mankato, the convicted men were there imprisoned.

Ah-kee-pah and Red Iron, though not prisoners, were with those who were at Mankato, and were quartered with the soldiers outside of the Indian prison.

Thirty-eight of those who were convicted and sentenced to be hung paid the penalty. When they were waiting for the drop, these men sang and recounted their war deeds and

sent farewells to their absent relatives, and while all this was going on the time came, the rope was cut, and thirty-eight hostile Indians hung in the air, each with a rope around his neck.

SIOUX CAMP AT FORT SNELLING.

The friendly Indians and their families, and the families of the prisoners, on their way to Fort Snelling, passed through Henderson, at which place the whites were very much angered and threw stones at the Indians, hitting some of them, and pulled the shawls and blankets off the women, and abused them much. But they finally got through the town without any one being killed, and formed a camp beyond the town, in an open prairie.

They were then taken down on the east side of the Minnesota river, and went into camp at some distance from Fort Snelling. Shortly after this the camp was moved again, being located close to the Minnesota river. These camps were always well guarded, but in spite of that many of the horses and oxen belonging to the Indians were stolen, including three horses that belonged to myself and Charles Crawford.

Then a fence was built on the south side of the fort and close to it. We all moved into this inclosure, but we were so crowded and confined that an epidemic broke out among us and children were dying day and night, among them being Two Stars' oldest child, a little girl.

The news then came of the hanging at Mankato. Amid all this sickness and these great tribulations, it seemed doubtful at night whether a person would be alive in the morning. We had 611 no land, no homes, no means of support, and the outlook was most dreary and discouraging. How can we get lands and have homes again, were the questions which troubled many thinking minds, and were hard questions to answer.

FRIENDLY INDIANS APPOINTED AS SCOUTS.

Then I went to General Sibley and had a talk with him, and suggested to him that some mixed-bloods be picked out as scouts and sent to Redwood Agency. But this was a difficult matter to consider, so General Sibley called into consultation the officers under him, and a letter was written to the great father in regard to it. An answer came, and I was asked who I thought should be sent out there. I gave in the names of myself, Michael Renville, Daniel Renville, Isaac Renville, John Moore, Thomas Robinson, and four full-blood Indians.

I was laughed at, and was asked whether I thought it was a light matter to so soon send out these full-blood Indians. My answer was, “You told me to pick out reliable men. I have done so. There are full-blood Indians who are more steadfast and more to be depended upon than many of the mixed-bloods. This is why I have chosen them.” The question was referred to the authorities at Washington, and in about a month the answer came that this might be done. Two Stars, E-chay-tu-ke-ya, E-nee-hah, and Wah-su-ho-was-tay, were chosen.

In the month of February, 1863, having got permission from General Sibley and rations, we came out of the inclosure at Fort Snelling and started on our journey. In passing the different towns on the way the people saw we were armed, and, surmising our occupation, they respected us and did not molest us in any way. We arrived at Fort Ridgely, and passing up the Minnesota river made our headquarters on Rice creek. The white men who had brought us thus far in sleighs then returned. Other scouts were added to these until ten of us had made our camp at Rice creek. Alexis and Joseph La Framboise came to where we were, and were included as scouts by General Sibley, and we staid there together.

After a short time we took provisions and blankets and started on a scouting expedition up the Minnesota river. We 612 came to Yellow Medicine, and then went on up the Minnesota to the Chippewa river. There we found signs of the hostile Indians, and commenced searching for their camp. They had sent their families away, and had waited for us to

come, as we learned afterward; but we were so long getting there that they finally followed their families, and we lost track of them. Then we came back and reported. Later we went on another scouting expedition to the westward. We kept working in this way till spring.

Soon after that an Indian by the name of Mar-pe-yah-doo-tah came into our scouts' camp from the region to which the hostile Indians had fled, and we took him to Fort Ridgely.

BEGINNING OF SIBLEY'S EXPEDITION, 1863.

The soldiers that were to go on General Sibley's expedition began to arrive, and with them were scouts who with their families had come from Fort Snelling. These are their names:

Anawag-ma-ne,

Kah-tah-tay,

Wah-kon-bo-e-day, and his brother,

Narcisse Frenier,

Charles Crawford,

Kah-wan-kay,

Joseph Renville,

Antoine Renville,

Ah-we-tan-e-nah,

Joseph Le Blanc;

also the following Medawakantons:

Wah-ke-yan-tah-wah,

Good Thunder,

Taopi,

Wah-hah-chan-kah,

Chay-tah-shoon,

Mah-pe-yah-wah-koon-zay,

Henry Ortley,

Three other scouts came up in a steamboat from Mankato, namely, Ah-wee-pah, Thomas Crawford, and Han-yo-ke-yan.

When General Sibley had completed his plans for the expedition against the Sioux in 1863, he notified the troops that were in camp near the Redwood river what day he would be there. Great preparations were made, and amid the playing of bands and waving of flags he was received with much distinction and honor.

It was decided there as to which scouts were to go on the expedition, and which were not to go. The following are the 613 names of those who were not to go, but to remain and scout with their headquarters at Fort Ridgely:

Two Stars,

Joseph Le Blanc,

Antoine Renville,

Han-yo-ke-yan,

Ah-we-tan-e-nah,

Mah-pe-yah-wah-koon-zay,

Wah-hah-chan-kah,

INDIAN SCOUTS IN THIS EXPEDITION.

The following are the names of those who were to go as scouts with General Sibley's expedition:

Gabriel Renville,

Michael Renville,

J. B. Renville,

Daniel Renville,

Isaac Renville,

Joseph Renville,

E-ne-han,

A-chay-tu-ke-yah,

John Moore,

Thomas Robinson,

Charles Crawford,

Thomas Crawford,

Kah-tah-tay,

Anawag-ma-ne,

Wah-kon-bo-e-day,

Henry Ortley,

Little Paul,

David Faribault, Sr.,

William L. Quinn,

Alexis La Framboise,

Joseph La Framboise,

We-yon-ske,

Chay-tah-shoon,

Taopi,

Wah-ke-yah-tah-wah,

Ah-kee-pah,

Kah-wan-kay,

Joseph Campbell,

Narcisse Frenier,

Joseph Coursall,

Good Thunder,

Wa-su-ho-was-tay.

FIRST MEETING WITH THE HOSTILE SIOUX.

The expedition then started, going by the way of Yellow Medicine, Lac qui Parle, Yellow Bank, and the foot of Big Stone lake, to the planting grounds of the Sissetons at the head of lake Traverse. Thence they went by the way of the big bend of the Sheyenne river, Bear's Den, and the Bald hills, to Eagle hill, and from there it was not far to the Missouri river.

There were Indians camped at this place, and some of General Sibley's scouts came suddenly upon some of the Indians. Little Paul was the first one to see them and reported it, and I was the first one who shook hands with the Indians who were coming. Some of them wanted to shoot me, but through the bravery of O-win-e-ku, who was a relative of mine and took my part, I finally met and shook hands with them.

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Biographic Sketch of Chief Gabriel Renville .

By Samuel J. Brown .

The subject of this sketch was born at Big Stone lake about April, 1825, and died at the residence of the writer at Brown's Valley, Minn., on August 26, 1892, being in his sixty-eighth year at the time of his death.

Gabriel's father was a full and only brother of the noted bois brulé, Joseph Renville (for whom one of the counties of the State is named), and was called in Sioux Ohiya, and

in English Victor,—the latter a translation of the Sioux name. Ohiya or Victor Renville was born and reared among the Sioux, and, though a mixed-blood, was, it is said, in appearance, language, habits, and feelings, a full-blood Sioux. He was a warrior of considerable note, and while on the war-path against the Chippewas was killed and scalped in the neighborhood of what is now Fort Ripley about the year 1832, shot dead in his canoe while coming down the Mississippi.

Gabriel's mother, Winona Crawford, also a mixed-blood, was the grand-daughter of Ta-tanka-mani, or Walking Buffalo, mentioned by Lieutenant Pike in 1805, and also described in Neill's History of Minnesota as a “Sioux chief who was the principal man at the treaty of Portage des Sioux [near the mouth of the Missouri river] in 1815,” and was the daughter of a Sioux woman (Ta-tanka-mani's daughter) and a Mr. Crawford, a prominent British trader in the Northwest prior to and during the War of 1812. She was also born and reared among the Sioux, and, though married, always retained her father's name. She lived for some time with the family of the noted Colonel Dixon, the “red-headed Scotchman” and trader at lake Traverse, who figured so prominently among the Indians of the Northwest in the war with England in 1812. She was married about 1819 to Narcisee Frenier, a bois brulé and Indian trader at lake Traverse, who, shortly after his marriage went over to the Missouri river to look for a location for a trading post, was taken sick on the trip, and, as is supposed, died, for he never returned. By this union there was born a daughter, Susan, who became the wife of the late Joseph R. Brown, and who is still living, and 615 now residing with her son, the writer, at Brown's Valley, Minn.

After Frenier's death, Winona married Ohiya, or Victor Renville, and by this union there was born a son, the subject of this sketch. About three years after the death of Gabriel's father she married Akipa, a full-blood, who later was given a white man's name and called Joseph Akipa Renville, and who was always prominent in the councils of his tribe, and who died at Sisseton Agency, South Dakota, in 1891. By this union there were born two sons, Charles Renville and Thomas Renville, both of whom have in late years added “Crawford” to their name, and who are now living at Good Will, South Dakota, the former being pastor

of the Presbyterian church there. Winona Crawford died at Sisseton Agency, S. D., in 1897, aged about ninety-two years.

Gabriel Renville never attended school, except for about a month in Chicago, and except also when he was learning to read and write his own language from the missionaries. When he was about sixteen years old, my father, then living at Grey Cloud, after cutting his hair and dressing him in white boys' clothes, took him to Chicago and placed him in school there; but school-room confinement and association with strangers speaking an unintelligible and strange tongue did not agree with him or suit him, and in about a month he ran away and traveled on foot across the prairies of Illinois and through the woods of Wisconsin back to his home in Minnesota. He could never be induced to return, but in later years always upbraided my father for not giving him a sound thrashing and sending him back.

He spoke no English, but was a thorough master of the Sioux tongue. He possessed an unlimited command of the language, was an easy speaker, and was never at a loss for words. The writer was intimately associated with him for many years,—acted as his interpreter on many a visit to the Great Father at Washington, and had therefore ample opportunities for judging,—and can say that in his opinion Gabriel Renville had no superior —no equal, even—as to ability in the use of the Sioux language. He knew the use of it so well and so completely that his every word was a sledge hammer, always clear, homely but strong, and to the point. The writer well remembers that on one occasion when in Washington he was asked by a high official if he would be pleased with an Eastern man for Agent. His answer was, 616 “No, give us a Western man. Eastern men are wise and good, but they can't tell an Indian from a buffalo calf.”

In personal appearance Chief Renville was a striking figure,—broad-shouldered, tall, straight, sinewy, and athletic looking. He would command attention anywhere.

As to his services and conduct during the Sioux outbreak of 1862 and the war following the outbreak, as well as the estimate placed upon his character and worth by prominent men who knew him, the writer can do no better than to give extracts of letters and papers from Gen. H. H. Sibley, Major Joseph R. Brown, Gen. John B. Sanborn, Senator C. K. Davis, all of Minnesota, and Prof. C. C. Painter, formerly of Fisk University, Tenn., and afterward agent of the Indian Rights Association at Washington, D. C.

General Sibley, in a communication to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, dated June 22, 1868, said:

Mr. Renville was among the most trusted and reliable of the mixed-bloods employed by me, while I was prosecuting the campaigns against the hostile Sioux in 1864 and 1865. Indeed, so well pleased was I with his fidelity, energy, and intelligence, that I appointed him Chief of the scouts to whom the outer line of defences of the frontier of this State, and of Dakota Territory, was entrusted; and he signalized himself by unremitting and distinguished services, in that important position.

Mr. Renville was instrumental in saving the lives of many white captives, taken by the Indians in 1862, by his influence and determined efforts in their behalf; and he lost a large amount of property, including horses, appropriated by the hostile savages, or destroyed, in consequence of his opposition to their murderous course.

In fact he was reduced from a position of comfort and comparative opulence, to depend upon what he could earn by his daily exertions, for the subsistence of himself and his family, and he was not included in the award of the $7,500 appropriated by Congress to be apportioned among those who had remained faithful to the government, by some strange and unaccountable omission.

I have appealed many times to the Interior and War Departments in behalf of the Indians and mixed-bloods who exposed life and property in defending the whites against the

outrages and massacres to which so many were subjected, during the outbreak referred to, but no one individual is entitled to more consideration than Gabriel Renville, and I trust it will be in the power of your Bureau to make ample amends to him for the losses he has sustained, and the sacrifices he has made, in maintaining the power of the government against the organized and almost universal disaffection and violence of his own kindred and people.

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Major Brown, in a communication to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, dated March 5, 1870, said:

Those organized for an armed resistance to the hostilities of the hostile bands were largely of the relations of the Chief, and were organized and operated under his exertions and authority. By the exertions of those Indians hundreds of whites were saved, and many of the hostile bands were punished. During the month of May, 1865, thirteen men who were on their way to depredate upon the whites were killed at different times by those friendly Indians, while acting as scouts for the protection of the frontier under the immediate command of Gabriel Renville, their chief.

Professor Painter, in a letter to Dr. Edward Everett Hale, of Boston, dated in September, 1888, said:

Renville is a fine specimen of the “noble red man;” stately, dignified, reticent, intelligent, straightforward and manly in his bearing, impressing those with whom he meets as possessing great reserved force which could easily be called into action if his good sense and perfect mastery of himself consented. During the winter I had many interviews with him, and was impressed always increasingly by the quiet dignity and greatness of the man. He told the story of his great wrongs in an unruffled, dispassionate calmness, which almost appeared to be indifference, but there were now and then flashes of lightning in

his eye which revealed reserves of strength and feeling which were under the control of a master mind and will.

General Sanborn, in a note to the writer dated September 16, 1892, said:

Renville's death was a great loss to his people, and to all his acquaintances. He was one of the best, if not the best man I ever knew, if good and benevolent actions done from good and benevolent motives constitute true goodness, which I think all concede. He was also a man of great mental force, capable of doing a great deal of good or a great deal of evil. It was fortunate both for the Indians and the whites that his influence and power was always used and always found on the side of right and justice. The Sissetons cannot expect to see his like again.

Senator Davis, in the course of a speech in the United States Senate, according to the Congressional Record of February 8, 1899, said:

I knew Gabriel Renville well. He first called my attention to this subject when I was governor of Minnesota, in 1874 and 1875. He was a great man in his way, and was a good man from any point of view. His men fought on our side in the Indian war. He rescued many white women and children from the hands of Little Crow and his band, then waging war 618 against us. He sent his young men into the armies of the United States during the war of the rebellion.

The writer is in possession of many other letters and papers from many other prominent men, among them Bishop Whipple, Dr. Daniels, and Major Rose, all of whom knew him well, all speaking in the highest terms of the man; but space will not allow of their reproduction here, and so will content himself by simply saying that he believes that the brains of Gabriel Renville saved many whites during the Sioux outbreak of 1862, that no person in the friendly camp made greater exertions for the preservation of the whites than he and that the combination of friendly Indians and mixed-bloods, through which the white

captives were obtained from the hostile Indians and delivered over to General Sibley, originated with and was organized by him.

So deeply and so thoroughly was the Department of the Interior impressed with Renville's abilities and general usefulness that at the close of the Indian war, at its suggestion, he was made Chief of the Sisseton and Wahpeton Sioux of lake Traverse, and remained as such chief until his death.

This rambling and imperfect sketch, already too long, must be brought to a close. But before doing so the writer would add that Minnesota owes much to Gabriel Renville, and that the least it ought to do for him would be to cause a suitable monument to be erected to his memory; and that in his opinion the shaft so to be erected should stand not only on the soil of the State he loved and served so well, but also on the spot where his forefathers lived, on the “old Sioux reservation,” which was confiscated by Congress, and which he labored so hard to have restored to the scouts and soldiers of his tribe, on the spot where General Sibley camped for a week with his whole army in 1863, preparing for a dash across the plains to the Missouri, and where Renville was then consulted and advised with so often, and where he and his scouts were accustomed to bivouac while “chasing the Little Crow,” and where the old chief died, between Big Stone and Traverse lakes. Let this be done that we may show to her sister states, and indeed to the world, that Minnesota can honor a worthy son, even though a mixed-blood Indian.

Browns's Valley, Minn., Nov. 18, 1903 .